A LULL IN THE CARPATHIAN FIGHTING

AUSTRIAN HEAVY ARTILLERY POST ENJOYING REFRESHMENTS WHILE SENTRIES WATCH THE ENEMY.

AMERICAN GIRL'S EXPERIENCES AS WAR NURSE IN FRANCE

Caught In Ostend by the Sudden Outbreak of Hostilities She Volunteered Her Services

Among the Americans at Ostend last summer when the war began was a girl from Ohio. Though her friends sailed for the United States by the earliest boat available, she chose to remain in Europe and became a nurse in various army hospitals. She relates some of her experiences below.

YOU can't choose the men to nurse, neither can you choose the hospital or the locality. When you volunteer, no matter how many diplomas or what qualifications there are behind you, your name is put on the list of Red Cross nurses and you are at the beck and call of the committees. If untrained and inexperienced then the heavy or manual part of the work falls on you. If you have a diploma great responsibilities are yours.

Anyway you take it the European army nurse belongs to a big, palpitating machine that is fed by youth and strength. I got into it by accident and remained through a sense of duty, for a good knowledge of German and French makes one invaluable as an attendant in a hospital, and the three languages kept my services in demand. I prize my experience during the months of toil I have passed through and wouldn't dispose of it for any amount of money. Nothing would tempt me to repeat it either. The work has added years and years to my life.

I'm glad to know I was able to do ever so little for the poor soldiers at a time when nurses were at a premium because there were so few in France. I have no conscientious scruples against leaving now, when the roster is full of names of women who have at least received some instruction in aiding the wounded.

Our Ostend hotel closed the last of August, not because the rooms were empty but because all the servants were Belgians and had been called to arms. I went to live in a villa by the sea with a Belgian acquaintance who was glad to have my company, as she, like everybody else, was getting pretty nervous.

Wounded soldiers soon began to arrive in great numbers. They did not remain long, at least those able to travel. After a few days each contingent crossed the Channel, yet beds and bandages had to be prepared and the soldiers nursed. The only ones left behind were those in a hopeless condition. As soon as one squad of wounded left another arrived, and so on.

From the very first I had volunteered, for there were never enough surgeons or nurses, and all hands were busy day and night. Sisters of Charity took the responsibility and the heavy part of the work and never spared themselves. There were always German soldiers among the wounded. All of us left in September. I went to England with a last shipload of wounded but a few days before the German army began to arrive.

I will not forget that seven hours trip across the turbulent Channel. The air was full of squalls and the small boat tossed like a feather on the fretted water. The wounded men—fifty in all—were very patient and never complained. Knowing the trip would be rough they were all made to lie down, cabins having been reserved for them. Such a trip was not a good thing for the weakened soldiers, but leaving them behind for the Germans to make prisoners of was not to be thought of. As many as could be accommodated at the nearby hospitals in France had already been sent there.

Every one was ill on that crossing, and the unfortunate part was that it took a long time for the boat to land, as it had to sneak in between gusts of wind. Now that it is all in the past I can look back and see touches of humor, but none of us thought of smiling then.

The faithful nuns stood by their charges as long as they could, but many of them became as helpless as their patients. When we finally got anchored in calm water and the poor nuns picked themselves up one by one the picture was more droll still. That is to say to one not afflicted with mal de mer.

Two of the men died before we reached shore, one from heart failure, one who had but a slight chance of recovery before we left. The latter realized his condition, but had begged piteously to be taken back to his home in Waterford, Ireland. The sufferings of all the men were somewhat lightened by opiates injected by the doctors.

We were received by the British with open arms and what fine care they took of us all! Things seemed so spotless, the air so pure after our stay in the crowded hotel ambulance, the tea was so good and there seemed to be a nurse and doctor to each patient. I gave my services in the bandage room those sadly glorious days of Indian summer and would have liked to stay there, for it was very agreeable going in to chat a little every day with my old patients. But duty called me elsewhere.

Late in October word came of the insufficient number of attendants for the wounded in France, so I with several trained British nurses went to Boulogne. Conditions there were so appalling that it seemed to me we were living through some maddening nightmare. The scarcity of nurses caused me to be assigned to serious cases and the little I had learned at Ostend served me well.

We were at one of the large maritime hospitals and wounded men arrived every day. In one week alone fully 500 were turned away. In our building there were several hundred patients, yet only fifty nurses and about a dozen doctors. We were so overcrowded that soldiers were placed on mattresses or on the floor on quilts.

Naturally nurses and surgeons were alike overworked. A nurse would offer such pleas as "Do come quickly, doctor. This boy's wound must be attended to before it is too late," or "Doctor, I've done all I can with my new case. Will you not step here a moment to look at this wound?" The overstrained medical man would shake his head and reply: "I can't be in two places at the same time. I don't dare hurry with this operation."

There are many things too anguishing to tell. I want to forget them. Anxious hours passed thus. No cut is as cruel as that left by shrapnel, and generally there are several wounds on a soldier who has been struck by shrapnel. Each wound has to be cleaned and dressed and it is not possible to do the work quickly.

Often when we reached "the next patient" he had ceased to suffer. There were many deaths among the trainloads of wounded from Furnes. Some of the men had been lying days in the trenches or fields. Their wounds may not have been serious at first, but exposure, chill, scarcity of nourishment and lack of antiseptic treatment got in their work with the fatal aid of gangrene. I knew a young soldier who had his arm amputated because of a neglected flesh wound on a finger. We had scores of lockjaw patients.

There was no such thing as rest in Boulogne. I was so fatigued that when I lay down to sleep my whole body throbbed. My conscience would not let me stay still, knowing as I did that there were so many soldiers thirsting for attention, that waiting on them meant for them not only ease from pain, but perhaps life. Then bathing and pulling off the stained and muddy clothing gave them such relief that the nurses could not refuse the attention.

The place was so crowded that only one tiny hall was reserved for the nurses and here we stayed a few hours at a time. In those dreary days no one thought of personal comfort.

Several weeks went by and I was about to break down under the strain when fortunately a boatload of doctors and nurses from Folkestone landed. Had I been a more experienced nurse and understood how to meet the situation and had I been less susceptible to the sufferings of the soldiers the life would not have been so wearing.

At the beginning of November I went to Dunkirk, my services having been asked for in the bandage room of a hospital just being opened. The very day of my arrival in the company of a Scotch nurse, an auxiliary like myself, we went to the station after my baggage.

As we came out an English surgeon we knew joined us. He was on his way to see some patients "in a shed," as he expressed it, and out of curiosity we walked into the shed—a big, bare structure that in time of peace holds freight. The floor was now covered with straw and several wounded men lay thereon. They wore their shoes and clothes and had been deposited in the makeshift hospital until there was a vacancy somewhere else.

Here I had struck the same condition as in Boulogne, but it seemed to me far worse, as in Boulogne the men were at least undressed and washed. Dunkirk was deserted by its wealthier class when the Germans began to come near. The houses left open were occupied by refugees and there was no room for the wounded soldiers. At that time there were four hospitals at Dunkirk, two military hospitals under the French Government and the two others opened in November by British subjects.

Dunkirk is practically but fifteen minutes from Furnes, which is near Dixmude and the trenches, therefore a "collective base" for the wounded. Had all the badly wounded been left at Dunkirk and quick attention given I believe 25 per cent. of the soldiers who perished could have been saved.

My companion was anxious to visit the ambulance inaugurated by the Duchess of Sutherland, so after leaving the shed we took the tram to Malo. The other ambulance fitted by Scotch philanthropists, Mr. and Mrs. Finnes, is near by. Both are beautifully situated on the shore and were used before the war as hotels.

The original intention of the Duchess of Sutherland and her husband, Mr. Fitzgerald, was to take care of a certain number of British wounded, but as soon as they learned of the unfortunates lying at the depot they had another dormitory added. The same was true of the Florence Finnes Ambulance, where instead of 100 wounded there were within a few days more than twice that number of patients representing all warring nationalities.

The unanticipated increase caught both places with an insufficient number of nurses, and these spoke nothing but their own language. A wounded German had just arrived that morning and as I passed his cot an English nurse was leaning over him trying to understand what he was asking for. I stopped to interpret, and later as I was passing down stairs Mr. Fitzgerald asked if I would not remain until another nurse who spoke German arrived. So again I was in active harness.

The work at this ambulance was all on one floor, the dormitory was bright and the view of the sea superb, and as hours were systematic and we had stated time on and off my duties as auxiliary were not too responsible. I did a little of everything there, making myself generally useful as at the other hospitals.

The nurses awaited were slow in coming and I would have remained on indefinitely at the ambulance but for the too large doses of fresh air. All the nurses as well as orderlies wear white cotton uniforms, with canvas shoes of white. There was a wretched draught through the entire hotel day and night. I caught a violent cold that kept me in bed a week. Returning to the dormitory with its "open door and window policy" was not to be considered. For a change I went to Paris to spend Christmas with friends.

The call of the wounded soldier was still in my ears, and as by that time I had had considerable experience as auxiliary I put my name on a list after having submitted my papers, for even though one does volunteer work one has now to have passed some kind of an examination either in the way of actual experience or in a class of first aid. It was New Year's Day, and I was sure that with so many names lined before mine my vacation would be prolonged. Before the week passed, however, I was assigned to a large ambulance at Passy.

The work there was least satisfactory of any in my experience and in many ways it was trying, as there seemed no head to the institution. Here the nurses had to furnish their costumes and have them laundered, and if they took meals there they had to pay for them. I lunched at the ambulance, preferring to take my other two repasts at the hotel.

Her Anxious and Trying Work in the Army Hospitals. Terrible Wounds Made by Shrapnel

Nearly all the soldiers are French with the exception of a few Turcos and Senegalese. The Africans are like grown up children. All the patients must have their hands taken care of; but when it came to manicuring the nails of a Turco oftener than once a day I swore off.

I had to write letters for the two in my ward. They had only picked up a few words since being in France, but it was astonishing how they made themselves understood. One day I sat down to write a letter for a Turco who had not called on my pen for some time. He said the letter was to his last wife. I don't know how many he had and was not inquisitive enough to ask, but began: "My Chere Femme."

"Non, non, pas ca," scowled the fellow impatiently. "I want them to think I've died. They all know I was wounded, and now please tell them I'm dead. I don't ever want to go back home. Then I can stay and marry you."

The hours were long at the Passy Ambulance and I was on my feet from 8 A. M. till 8 P. M. It was generally 9 o'clock by the time I reached my hotel, and as a special favor to a volunteer foreigner nursing the wounded the proprietor had dinner kept hot for me. Often I would only take a bite, then tumble into bed. I had ten beds to make every day; I helped the convalescents to dress and undress; I ran errands for my men besides reading and writing when they asked it; twice a day I went to the dietary kitchen to prepare food for my patients who were not allowed to partake of the regular fare.

Trying to keep up the spirits of the wounded is not always easy when they begin to realize what the absence of sight or a limb signifies. But I have no fault to find with any of the soldiers. They were a patient, good tempered, considerate lot of men who were grateful for every effort of mine.

I did not find my associations at the ambulance congenial. The nurses represented almost every stratum of society. As every one knows, the European trained nurse of former times differs from the American. In France she has been little higher than a domestic. But she does know something of nursing and she has endurance. However, in the ambulance she played second fiddle to the women who had taken up the work only recently.

Many of the latter cling to their wonderful coiffures, ringed fingers, &c. They only want to nurse the officers, and here poor little piou-piou scores, for the other nurse is handed down to him and he benefits by the exchange. There was jealousy and petty bickering among the volunteers and I was glad to be considered an outsider. I escaped falling in love with any of my patients, for which offence one of the nurses one day accused me of having no heart.

Harlem Y. W. C. A.'s Home

WORK on the new home of the Harlem branch of the Y. W. C. A. at the corner of Lenox avenue and 124th street has just begun. The money for this new building represents the Harlem branch's share of the four million dollar fund collected last year by the National Y. W. C. A. This fund, as stated during the campaign for raising it, is intended only for new buildings and permanent repairs.

The new building of the Harlem branch will be one of the handsomest and most complete of its kind. It is to be fireproof with seven stories and a roof garden. On this roof garden there will be an out of door tennis court and a booth for moving pictures. The dining room, which in the old building was in the basement, will be next to the roof with a southwesterly exposure. There will be a new and larger gymnasium and the swimming pool will be one of the largest, if not the largest, in New York. The large recreation hall will be arranged in such a manner that it can be used as an auditorium or theatre, while on the two floors reserved exclusively for educational work there will be no fixed benches or chairs. These rooms on occasions can be thrown together or made smaller by folding partitions and doors.

In the new dormitory there will be no dark rooms. The library will be enlarged and in addition to sewing rooms, press rooms, several large reception and recreation rooms there will be a dozen or more small private parlors for the girls to receive their callers. One unique feature is the hospital suite. This will consist of two wards, the nurse's room, a sitting room, two baths and a kitchenette. This suite also has a southwesterly exposure and is so arranged that it can be cut off entirely from the rest of the house.